

# Intangible Cultural Heritage Update

## News and notes on Newfoundland and Labrador's Intangible Cultural Heritage Program

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### Nunatsiavut Heritage Forum

*By Dale Jarvis, ICH Development Officer*

I snapped this photo earlier this month on a break during the Nunatsiavut Heritage Forum, held in Hopedale. In a way, the polar bear skin stretched out alongside the satellite dish represents what the entire conference was about: the link between past and present, the Labrador of the past and the Labrador of the future.

This was the second heritage forum held by Nunatsiavut. Last year's forum was in Nain, and this year's was in Hopedale. It was the first time I'd be back to Hopedale since 1995, and it was great to see the old Moravian mission buildings and church again. The Forum had presentations from most of the Inuit communities in Labrador, along with presentations by Torngâsok Cultural Centre, Labrador Interpretation Centre, Them Days, Parks Canada, and the Labrador Heritage Society. Jill Mitchell gave a very interesting update on Torngâsok's Inuksuit Project, which has been collecting stories and oral histories from different communities about the meaning, uses and construction of one of the north's most recognizable symbols: inuksuit (the plural of inukshuk).

I presented on the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador's built heritage granting programs, but also presented on intangible cultural heritage, and some of the work we have been doing to promote ICH at the community level. Rita Andersen, one of the interpreter-translators, asked me to clarify the term ICH, to help with translating the concept into Inuktitut. Later, she told me of the word "KaujimajatuKait" --which means "traditional knowledge" -- a phrase with deep resonance for the work we are all doing. While it is a new term to some in Labrador, intangible cultural heritage is very much alive in the region, and is something that local organizers see as having great potential for future study and development.

It was an important conference, in many ways, and one which I hope will result in more ICH work in Labrador. I hope to return to Labrador in November, to deliver community workshops on ICH in each of the Inuit communities. More work and more details to follow!

## Young Folklorists Program

*By Dale Jarvis*

What do folklorists do? At the end of May, a group of sixteen students in Grades 7 to 9 will find out!

This year, in cooperation with the Eastern School District's Mini Course enrichment program, coordinated by Bill Tucker, the ICH program will be running a two-day folklore field school.

Students will go for a folklore walk along Water Street, help develop a folklore project of their own, and learn how to interview people about local stories and history. They will get a chance to use digital recording equipment to collect audio and photos about local traditions, learn about consent forms, and share some of their stories online.

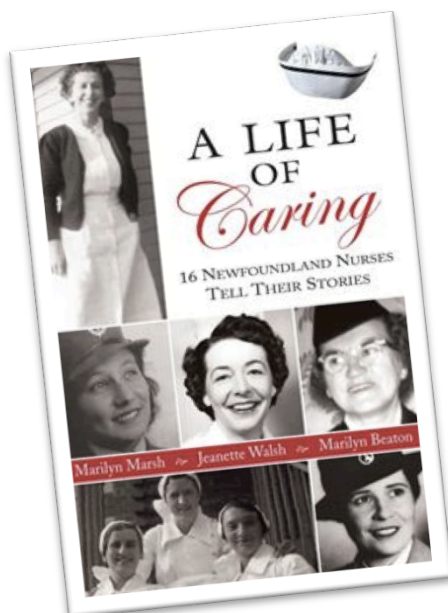
The development of the mini course dovetails nicely with a few of the objectives of the province's intangible cultural heritage strategy.

The provincial ICH strategy recognizes, as a guiding principle, that the inclusion of multiple voices, including those of youth, is important in all work relating to Intangible Cultural Heritage. ICH is kept alive and is relevant to a culture when it is regularly practiced, and learned within communities and between generations. One of the key areas we must address as our work with ICH continues is the inclusion of youth in our thinking, planning, and celebration of our living traditions.

We'll be posting some of the completed interviews on Memorial University's Digital Archives Initiative, and featuring some of the student's work in the next edition of the newsletter. Stay tuned!



## Nursing Stories to be added to Memorial's Digital Archive Initiative



In the mid 1980s Marilyn Marsh interviewed a group of Newfoundland nurses who graduated between 1918 and 1949 and worked in a variety of nursing settings and locations in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and in several cases internationally. The interviews were transcribed by Jeanette Walsh and Marilyn Beaton and sixteen of them published in the book *'A life of caring: 16 Newfoundland nurses tell their stories'* in 2008. For a variety of reasons not all interviews were suitable for publication.

HFNL's ICH office has been working with Beaton and Walsh to digitize the interview tapes for inclusion on Memorial University's Digital Archive Initiative. ICH programs assistant Melissa Squarey and DAI intern Chris Mouland have been digitizing the audio cassettes, which will then be shared online.

The nurses' stories capture what life was like for women and nurses during that era. Women in the 1920s and 30s had few career options. Most chose to stay in their community, marry and have families. For those wishing to pursue a career, to travel or were adventuresome, nursing provided the greatest opportunities but for many also their greatest challenges. These tapes reveal their lived experiences and provide insight into who they were as women and nurses.

## Springing for New Shoes with RNC Mounted Unit Local farrier Kevin Dillon on the tradition of shoeing horses.

*Text and photos by Melissa Squarey*

*Kevin Dillon is the fourth in our regular Tradition Bearers Spotlight.*

Local farrier, Kevin Dillon, works with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary's Mounted Unit Horses. Originally from the Goulds, just outside of St. John's, Kevin says his job means "I put the shoes on horses, I also do some corrective trimming and I've been at this for about 10 years now."

Kevin started learning this traditional skill from a local man in the Goulds, Dave Pack, that had been shoeing horses for about 30-40 years. "He taught me for about 3 years before I went on my own. He started by letting me take off shoes for a couple of months, and then each time he let me do something more and a little different. Eventually he let me nail shoes on and such."

Kevin remembers his first experiences with shoeing. "I was quite nervous and took a long time to do the horses. I guess I was frightened I was going to make the horses sore and having some handfuls of horses that weren't so easy to do. I've had one horse in particular who beat up my truck when it got a fright, busted out of the chains, and ran right into the back of my truck" says Kevin.

Kevin also has some other interesting experiences throughout his shoeing career. Kevin says "One time I was working on a horse out around the bay and I took off a shoe only to find out the last person had the shoe on backwards. That was different! I had another horse where I picked up the foot and it fell over. That was pretty funny. That one just got back up and I started again."

The horses, according to Kevin, respond differently to the process of having Kevin work on them. He says "Most of them are pretty good about it. The younger ones that aren't used to having it done are a little bit of a handful but they get better at it as they get older.

Young horses are not accustomed to being shod.

"A lot of them are trying to jump around and kick you, and the occasional one will try and bite you but that's all they do," says Kevin. "I got kicked a nice few times and when that happens you don't really want to mess with another one that day."

Kevin starts his day off by feeding his own two racing horses then he begins his day shoeing. Kevin says "I probably do about three or four horses a day. Each horse takes about an hour to an hour and a half." Kevin has specific tools for the farrier trade. Kevin discusses some of them saying "We have an anvil which is for shaping the shoes. A set of pull-offs for hauling the old shoe off. A set of nippers for trimming the feet. A knife for trimming up the sole of the foot. A rasp for filing off the old hoof and making everything all level. And a hammer." For protection Kevin wears an apron which protects his legs.

Kevin begins the process of shoeing by removing the old shoe. He then trims up the feet and makes sure they are level and the same length. Then he finishes the process by nailing the shoes back on. The horses are usually good for about six weeks before Kevin needs to see them again. "It's important to keep the shoes level so they can walk and everything is the same. If a shoe is off, some horses can get sore from it" says Kevin.

There are different techniques that Kevin uses for shoeing horses. For example, Kevin says "On a race horse you have to tip their angles so that they don't interfere with each other so they don't hit their legs together and such. Mounted horses are pretty straight forward, there's not special trimming or anything with them."

Kevin has been shoeing the Mounted Unit's horses for about three years. The former farrier, Jim Hansford, recommended





Kevin to take over the work. The RNC Mounted Unit values the work that Kevin does with their horses. Constable Coombs spent time speaking about how Kevin works with him and his horse for special needs. Constable Coombs says “Kevin is really helpful about helping me deal with the horse’s foot problems. The streets of St. John’s take a toll on their (the horses) feet. Mine in particular has the worst feet out of all of them. We have a saying here at the Mounted Unit ‘No foot, No horse’. It’s important that we have a good farrier.”



There are two major types of farrier work, however, Kevin says “ Nothing big has changed in shoeing, there are a lot of different tools coming out that make the job easier and different types of shoes that’s about it.” For example, Kevin’s pull offs can not only be used to haul the shoe from the foot but also to widen shoes instead of using the anvil. The shoes themselves have changed some too. “Before there were only self-shape shoes but, now you can get pre-shaped ones which make it a bit quicker, shaped for the front and the back.”

“There doesn’t seem to be much change in the tradition since it’s started, every book you read now and the old books all have the same stuff. It’s remained pretty consistent. The only main difference is you can do hot-shoeing or cold-shoeing. Hot-shoeing requires a forge and heating up the shoe to put it back on the foot while hot, which levels it out. It’s more common up away. I thinking there’s only one person here (in Newfoundland) who does it. It’s easier to level a horse’s foot with the hot-shoe than with a cold-one but, that’s the only main difference between the practices.”

The farrier community is very small on the Avalon. There are only about five or six people who work constantly as farriers. Kevin worries that the

tradition may fade away into the sunset. “I have someone who comes around with me every now and then and it’s hard to get someone who’s interested in doing it. Most of the five to six people doing it are getting older. It’s time for some new people to start doing it. I would say it’s at threat because it doesn’t seem like there is anyone who wants to be going at it anymore. I think it’s going to be pretty busy for a few people who are left. There’s probably 200-300 horses in this area alone. I do about 40-50 horses and I even travel to Grand-Falls to do horses there.”

Kevin says “the most important thing about being a farrier is to make sure the horses’ shoes are level and that it’s done properly and the horse is not off.” The farrier tradition is passed on through apprenticeship and word of mouth. Though there are tangible skills and tools needed the job itself comes from the knowledge of the person before. It’s important that young people like Kevin are continuing to make a living doing a job that requires not only physical skill but great concern about the people and animals they work with.

*If you know a special tradition bearer in your community please contact our office so that we can hear about it. We are always looking for more tradition bearers to highlight across the province. Email us at [ich@heritagefoundation.ca](mailto:ich@heritagefoundation.ca).*

